

Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees
Executive Committee – Lecture Hall
Draft Minutes
February 23, 2022 9 a.m.

Members attending:

Peggy Sheets, Ken Venable, Cliff Garstang, Bill Sibert

Members Absent:

Ron Capps, Emmett Hanger, Ned Ruby, Emmett Toms, Paul Vames

Guests Attending:

Davis Trainum, American Frontier Culture Foundation

Staff Attending:

Megan Newman, Alex Thymmons, Lydia Volskis, Susan Grable, Cliff Edwards, David Puckett, Andrew Richardson, Davis Tierney

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Mrs. Peggy Sheets

Mrs. Sheets called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. and noted that as there is not a quorum, we will have an informational meeting.

II. Approval of January 2022 Minutes

Mrs. Sheets

The minutes will be approved at the next meeting with a quorum

III. Museum Update

Dr. Megan Newman

Dr. Newman noted that staff will present their own reports and she introduced new Director of Marketing Alex Thymmons.

A. Finance Report

Ms. Susan Grable

Director of Finance Susan Grable gave the financial report. She said that the special fund revenue is holding steady, and that the Cares Act funds are still showing up on our financial reports. These should disappear in the next report. Overall revenue is steady and expenditures look good for this point in the fiscal year. She increased the potential revenue estimates this year to account for summer camp revenues, which often come mainly during early enrollment periods in the Spring. She noted that the Department of Planning and Budget has said that we may continue paying staff from the general fund revenue, as we have some flexibility.

B. Marketing Report**Dr. Alexander Thymmons**

Marketing Director Dr. Alex Thymmons greeted the group and said that he is happy to be here and looking forward to working with everyone. He said that one of his first projects will be to refresh the website. Dr. Newman said that he is already delivering info data analytics from social media which are really fascinating and useful. Dr. Thymmons described out past target audiences and some of the audiences we still need to reach. This information will also be good for the Foundation's capital campaign. Mrs. Sheets complimented Dr. Thymmons on his Facebook posts with weather stats to entice people to come out to visit the Museum. Mr. Garstang also complimented other recent content posts. Dr. Thymmons thanked the interpretive team for supporting him with a steady stream of info for the posts. Dr. Newman noted that the plan is to diversify the Facebook posts into several tracks, for content, events, and basic marketing posts.

C. Education Update**Mr. Andrew Richardson**

Director of Education Andrew Richardson reported that January was slower than last year, as last year we had a number of extra virtual programs, and this year we had plenty of snow. For the year-to-date we had a 102% increase over last year, and many schools who booked virtual programs last year are returning to field trips. He said that we have been involved with a number of outreach programs for the Roanoke City Schools and soon will work with the Roanoke County schools. He said that we are planning for the return of several large events. The non-fiction night for the SAW schools will be held April 19-20-21, during which local schoolchildren and their parents receive free books, a tour of the Museum and pizza. The school district staff will staff the event, headquartered in the pavilion, and the Museum may need some shuttle drivers, and other volunteer helpers. Next week summer camp reservations open and we will be seeking to hire eight summer camp counselors.

D. Interpretation Report**Mr. Davis Tierney**

Director of Interpretation Davis Tierney reported that he has been participating in all of the meetings to define the content and timelines for the Crossing Gallery exhibit. Several of our staff have traveled to Jamestown today to collect some patterns for historic garments. The interpretive staff will be back on site in costume on March 17th for a large school group visit and a "soft" opening, then fully back on site for public opening Friday March 18th. Staff training is ongoing, the costume policy has been updated, and several job openings have been posted. The pool of applicants is not large and we will work to find the best candidates we can. He thanked Susan and Mrs. Sheets for their work to increase wages. He mentioned that we are also recruiting volunteers.

E. Operations/Physical Facilities

Mr. Cliff Edwards

Mr. Edwards reviewed a list of maintenance reserve projects. He said that Shentel has asked for a right-of-way across the Augusta Woods road, and that he has sent the paperwork to the Department of General Services to create an easement and finalize the plan. Work is underway at the Octagonal Barn complex.

He said that the Foundation and Augusta Woods are each paying half for the new sign at the beginning of the Augusta Woods road just past the Aldi entrance.

Dr. Newman said that the FY23 budget request to the Foundation has been submitted and that the newly reconstituted subcommittees will use the revised Strategic Plan as a guide for their work.

F. Crossing Gallery Update

Mrs. Peggy Sheets

Mrs. Sheets said that great progress has been made by staff and Board on the permanent exhibit plans. Senator Hanger has given her a positive report on out budget requests status within the state budget.

Mr. Tierney reported that he will write up a draft of the proposed timeline and content for the exhibit gallery, and then will distribute it for review and comment to a number of people. A more complete draft will be ready for the Executive Committee to review at their March 30 meeting, with plans to have a final draft ready for the full Board of Trustees at their meeting on April 29th.

IV. Foundation Report

David Trainum

Foundation President David Trainum said that:

- The Foundation has raised \$64,000 or its \$70,000 goal; the campaign runs through June 30
- The Foundation has plans for a May Day event involving picnic baskets and Annual passes
- The Golf Tournament is in September, and there are plans for another Fall fundraiser as well
- The Finance Committee has been working on the FY23 budget
- The Foundation has a contract for the sale of the Dices property and building
- The Foundation is recruiting new Board Members
- Kelly Sheely has joined the Foundation office part-time
- Plans are underway for the Capital Campaign to support the Crossing Gallery

Mrs. Sheets thanked Mr. Trainum and the Foundation Board for all of their support and collaboration.

V. Old Business

No items of Old Business were introduced.

VI. New Business

Dr. Thymmons said that he is planning for an integrated marketing strategy, and one of the first items under consideration is a refreshed logo. He explained that the logo needs to be simple, memorable, easily recognizable and reproducible, and able to be seen on mobile phones and tablets.

He described the color and shapes within the new logo and how they relate to the Museum's mission and content. Mr. Garstang said he liked the proposed new colors and logo and wondered if the wheel shape bore too much resemblance to a Buddhist symbol. He also wondered if a focus group might be helpful. Some discussion followed. Dr. Newman noted that we can change the wording for various needs, and Dr. Thymmons agreed, noting that the wagon wheel shape is the basic part of the logo. She asked anyone with comments or ideas to send them to Dr. Thymmons or herself.

Mr. Tierney said that he is concerned that the Museum not seem too Eurocentric in its advertising, and stated that we are not a museum only about immigration.

Mrs. Sheets and Dr. Newman reiterated that people should send their comments to Alex and that the proposal will move to the March 30 Executive Committee.

VII. Next Meeting Date

Committee

The next meeting date will be March 30, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. in the Lecture Hall.

VIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Sheets

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.